

Developing a Critical Element

ACTION VERB

Conducts

OBJECT

Investigations

PURPOSE (optional)

in order to Improve Operations

Checklist for Critical Elements

- ☐ Purposeful/goal oriented
- ☐ Significant component of the job
- ☐ Recurring aspects of the job
- ☐ Position-based
- ☐ Within the authority of the position
- ☐ Required to fulfill the role that the organization has specified
- ☐ Distinguishable from other job elements
- ☐ Represent objective criteria, i.e. job-related behaviors, tasks, outcomes, not personality or traits
- ☐ Represents individual responsibility
- ☐ Practical to measure
- ☐ Specific enough to determine whether results are accomplished

Critical Element Examples

Works cooperatively with others throughout the station to maximize value provided to both internal and external customers including; other station employees, FWS employees, the Department, NGOs, and others who use the facility.

Applies established IT security requirements and procedures (operational, technical, etc.) when utilizing IT systems or accessing electronic data in accordance with the bureau's IT security plan and applicable regulations/policy.

Develops the High Country Refuge Cooperative Management Plan by completing inventories and studies in conformance with the Regional Recreation Management Plan to improve public safety and security and protects public resources from damage.

Serves as the Management Assistant and confidant to the Project Leader and support staff, scheduling appointments and making commitments for the Project Leader, screening calls and visitors and routing requests to appropriate subject matter experts or personally responding to routine requests, and preparing and controlling correspondence which meets USFWS format requirements, ensuring deadlines are met.

Provides proactive intervention to reduce the occurrence of inappropriate bear-visitor interaction which contributes to the protection of the bear population.

Developing Performance Standards

The benchmark standards describe levels of performance for any given position. However, rating officials are encouraged to augment those benchmark standards with specific standards, using the following guidance.

The best standards are:

- Stated concretely and specifically
- Practical to measure
- Meaningful
- Exceed able
- Realistic and based on sound rationale

Some questions that might be asked to assist in developing the standards include the following:

- Which general measures apply?
 - Is quality important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how well the work is done?
 - Is quantity important? Does the stakeholder or customer care how many are produced?
 - Is it important to accomplish the element by a certain time or date?
 - Is it important to accomplish the element within certain cost limits?
 - What measures are already available?
- How could quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or cost-effectiveness be measured?
- Is there some number or percent that could be tracked?
- If the element does not lend itself to being measured with numbers and can only be described, ask:
 - Who could judge that the element was done well?
 - What factors would they look for?

Rating officials should be careful that the “fully successful” standard is not impermissibly “absolute,” i.e., allows no room for errors, nor that it is a “backwards” standard, i.e., described in terms of work that does not get done.

Some questions that might be asked to help determine whether you are writing an absolute standard include:

- How many times may the employee fail this requirement and still be fully successful?
- Does the standard use words such as “all,” “never,” and “each”? (These words do not automatically create an absolute standard, but they often alert you to problems.)
- If the standard allows for no errors is that because an error would result in risk of death, injury, etc.?

Some questions that might be asked to help determine whether you are writing a backwards standard include:

- Does the standard express the level of work the rating official wants to see or does it describe negative performance? (Example of describing negative performance: Requires assistance more than 50 percent of the time. **A Better Choice is: Works independently more than 50 percent of the time.**)
- If the employee did nothing, would he or she meet the standard, as written? (Example: Completes fewer than four products per year. **A Better Choice is: No more than 3 products are completed after the established deadline.**)